

Russia's Campaign *to* **Influence U.S. Elections**

Office of the West Virginia Secretary of State

Rev. 5/2019





**Don't
fall
for
it !**

Time Magazine, Vol. 188 No. 14 (October 10, 2016)



Military Operations

Strategic
Operational
Tactical



Strategic Level

Employment of Russia's National Power



Who Is Behind It?

To Putin, the end justifies the means

2016 - Russia spent \$millions distributing misleading & false info on social media to:

- **Disrupt** U.S. democratic election processes
- Cause U.S. citizens to **doubt** election systems & results
- Turn U.S. citizens against government
- Create distrust, **sow discord** & generate chaos
- Pit people against one another



What is the Goal?

- **Divide, Discredit, and Distract the West**
 - Have us not trust our own government
 - Degrade NATO cohesiveness
 - **Turn us on ourselves**
- **Themes from Russian attacks overseas:**
 - Western policy failures, setbacks, incompetence
 - Russia's successes
 - Unpredictability of U.S.



Why Are They Doing It?

**Can't compete with
U.S. economically**

**Can't stand toe to toe with U.S.
militarily**

**Only hope to stay competitive is to
bring U.S. down from the inside**



Today's Strategic Center of Gravity

The Internet



Transformative Commodities Throughout History

- **Hunter/Gatherer:** **Stones**
- **Agricultural:** **Land**
- **Bronze Age:** **Copper**
- **Industrial Revolution:** **Oil/Iron/Steel**

We have recently entered a new age

- **Information Age:** **Data**



Russia's Operational Means

Social Media Campaign



How? Information Operations

Information is Power

Propaganda is as old as war itself

- **Scale is new**, given the internet
- Russia has **weaponized the internet**
- Russia seeks “**Information Dominance**” vs **US openness, security**

Intensified by Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Bad actors now run **mass influence campaigns** like never before
- AI - efficient **targeting** of people most vulnerable to manipulation



The “Great Game” Cyber Style

Today’s Clash of Civilizations Takes Place on Social Media

- China’s “Art of War” – win without fighting
- Russia’s great chess tradition – win by out-smarting opponent

Khrushchev

You Americans are so gullible. You won't accept Communism outright; but we'll feed you small doses of Socialism until you finally wake up & find you already have Communism. We shall conquer you without firing a shot!

- America’s “Spirit of ‘76” -- win on ideas, human freedom, liberal democracy
- North Korea, Iran/Terrorist Organizations also quite active
- Groundwork laid for **foreign & domestic** attacks



The New “Great Game”

Data is the new oil

Clive Humby

- World powers now struggle for **data** superiority
5G, AI, machine learning, quantum computing
- **Data** has **economic, political, & military** importance
- All **data**/information becomes strategic



IoT, Blockchain, Bluetooth, Artificial Intelligence (AI)

...the rising philosophy of the day, I'd say it is Dataism.

David Brooks, NY Times

- **Internet of Things (IoT)** – quantum leap in **available data**
- **Bluetooth** – everything connected => **data exchange**
- **Blockchain** - Unchangeable, permanent **data storage**
- **AI** - Unfathomable capacity to **retrieve/process data**

Enhances “Dataism”

- **Big Data**
- “Universe consists of **data flows**”
- Value determined by contribution to **data processing**



AI, Algorithms, Bots


AI is the new electricity

Andrew Ng

- AI turns **data into actionable intelligence**
 - National Security, Economic Competitiveness, Scientific Discovery
- AI allows **micro-targeting** to influence decision-making
- **Algorithms** – set rules to get directed jobs done
- **Bots** – “Web Robots” run tasks on internet, **social media**
- Data-driven **social media is key to public opinion**



How Does This Apply to Us?



**Russia doesn't have to break
into data systems;**

**they achieve goals on softer
targets using AI, algorithms,
bots, & micro-targeting**



Using Our Strengths Against Us

Freedom is the American Spirit

2016 - Russia's meddling in U.S. elections

cost < 1/2 the expense of a single fighter jet.

US Strengths = Freedoms

- Freedom of press
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of assembly

Russia has **leveraged all of these**
via social media!



The Power of Social Media

Using social media it was easy for Russia to:

- Reach **millions of voters** with **minimal costs**
- Exploit divisive & heated issues within U.S.
- Incite opposition, division & protests
- Focus was on whoever was in front, to sow discord
- Publically diminish front-runners, generating mistrust



Russian Social Media Efforts in 2016

Statistics of known false/misleading activity

Twitter: 10 Million Tweets

Instagram: 116,000 posts

Facebook: 61,000 posts

Additional Videos: 1,000+

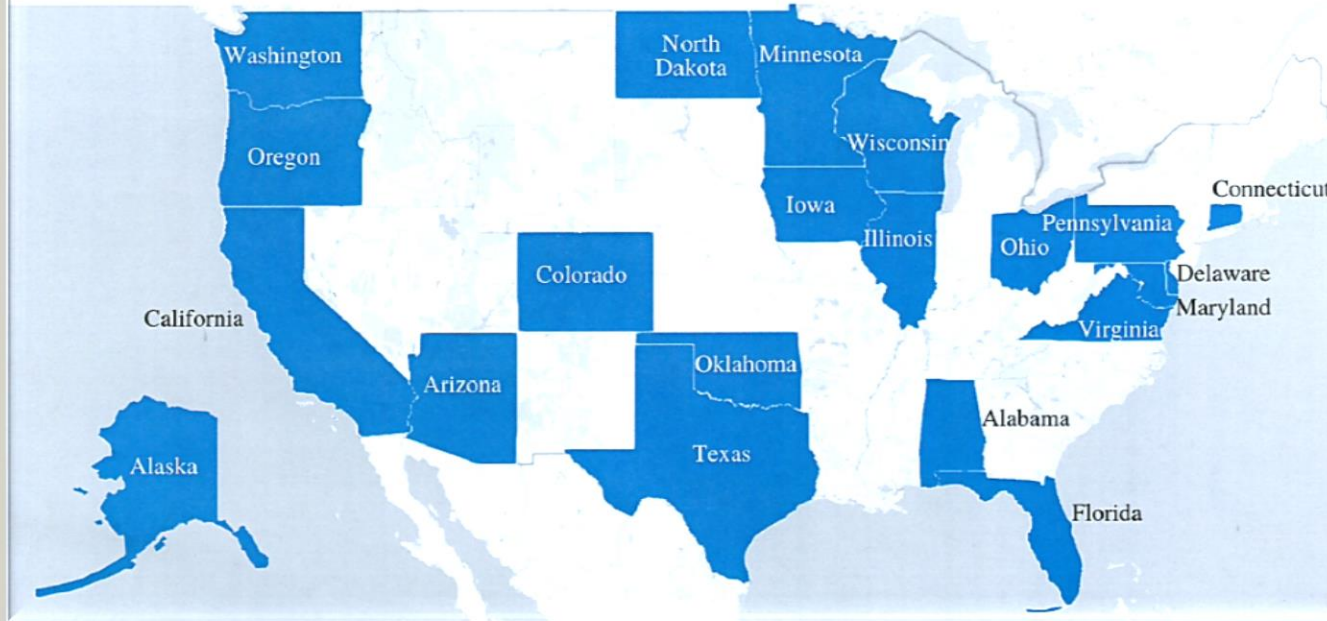


2016: Russia Scanned All 50 States

Over 20 had “extra penetrating measures”

States Targeted by Russian Hackers

- 21 States Targeted According to DHS
- Every State Surrounding WV Except Kentucky



**Foreign
Interference
is everywhere**



Tactical

Employment

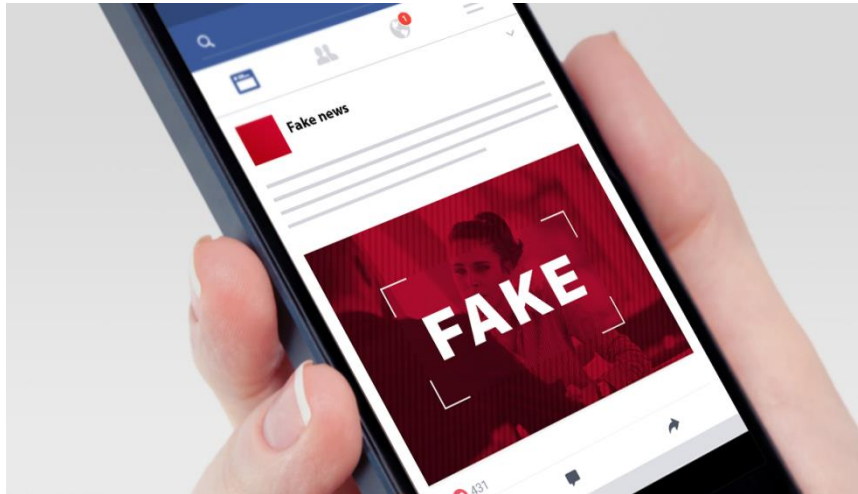
Real World Examples



Why YOU?

It starts with **YOU!** You are **1 of >4 billion** internet users.

- Your demographic is most likely to share posts
- Social media presence is highest among ages 18-24
- High school seniors are newest generation of voters
- First-time voters in 2020 Election – ***be educated & prepared!***



Russia's Target: the American Spirit

5 Real-World Examples



1

Disinformation

Altered candidate's photo to manipulate public

Pro-Stacey Abrams



Anti-Stacey Abrams

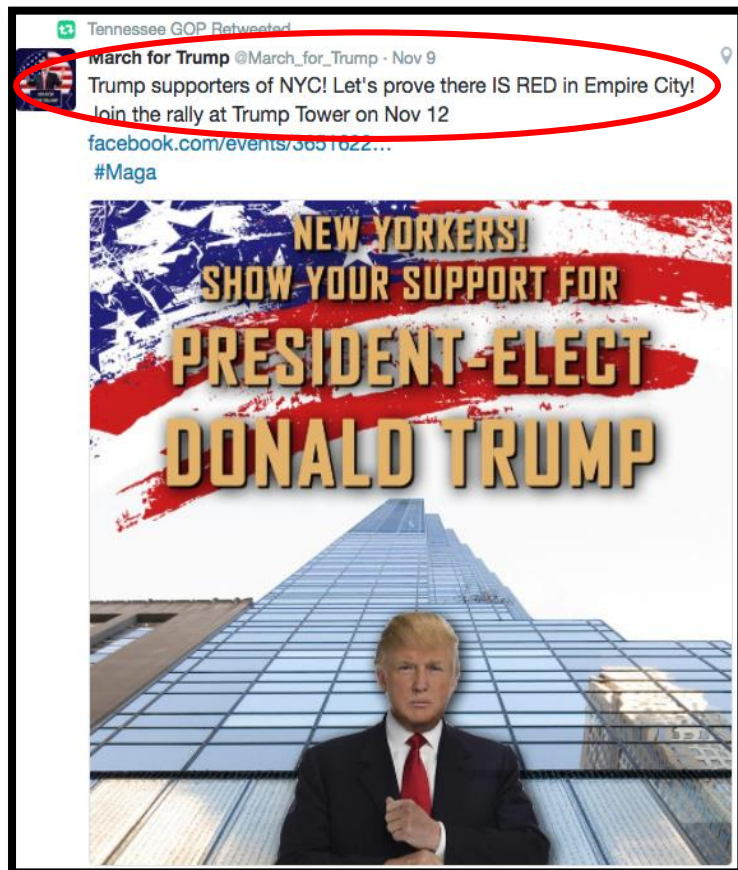


2

Competing Rallies

Creation & promotion of competing protests

Pro-Trump Rally



Nov. 12, 2016
4 days after
the election.

Anti-Trump Rally



3

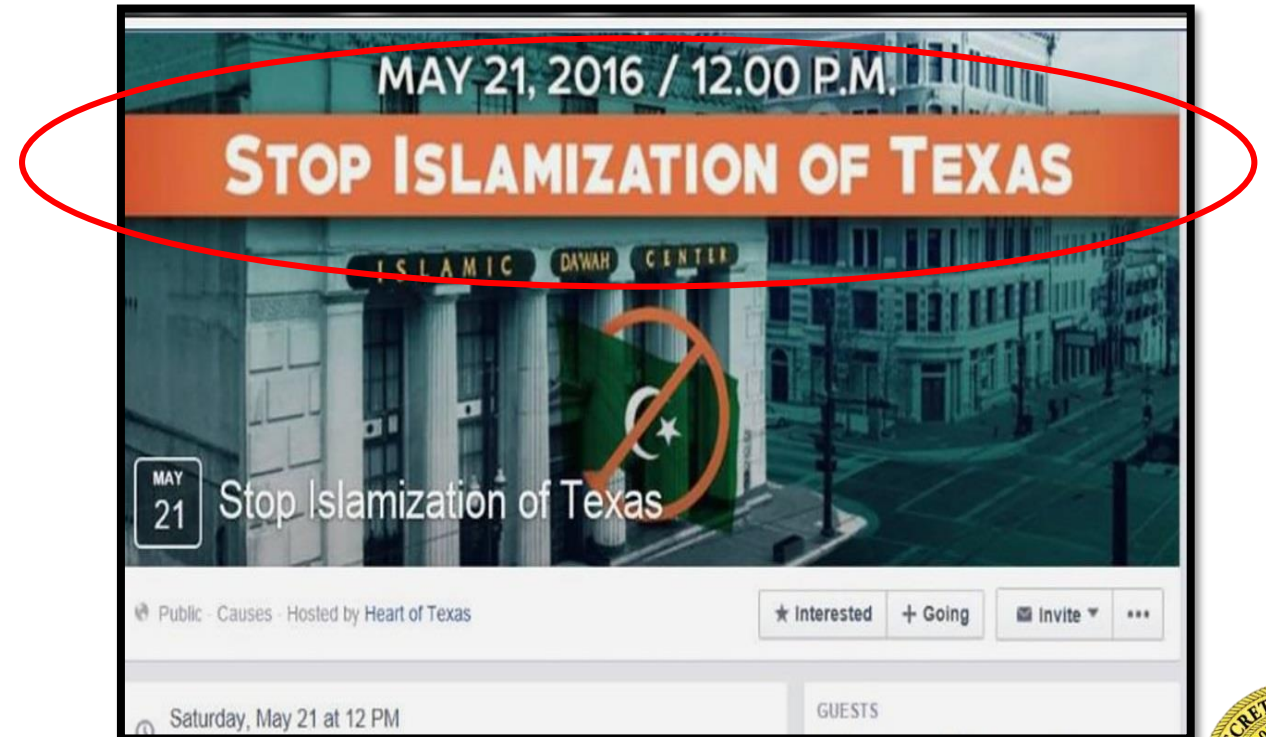
Inciting Tensions

Advertised competing protests at same location & date

Pro-Islam



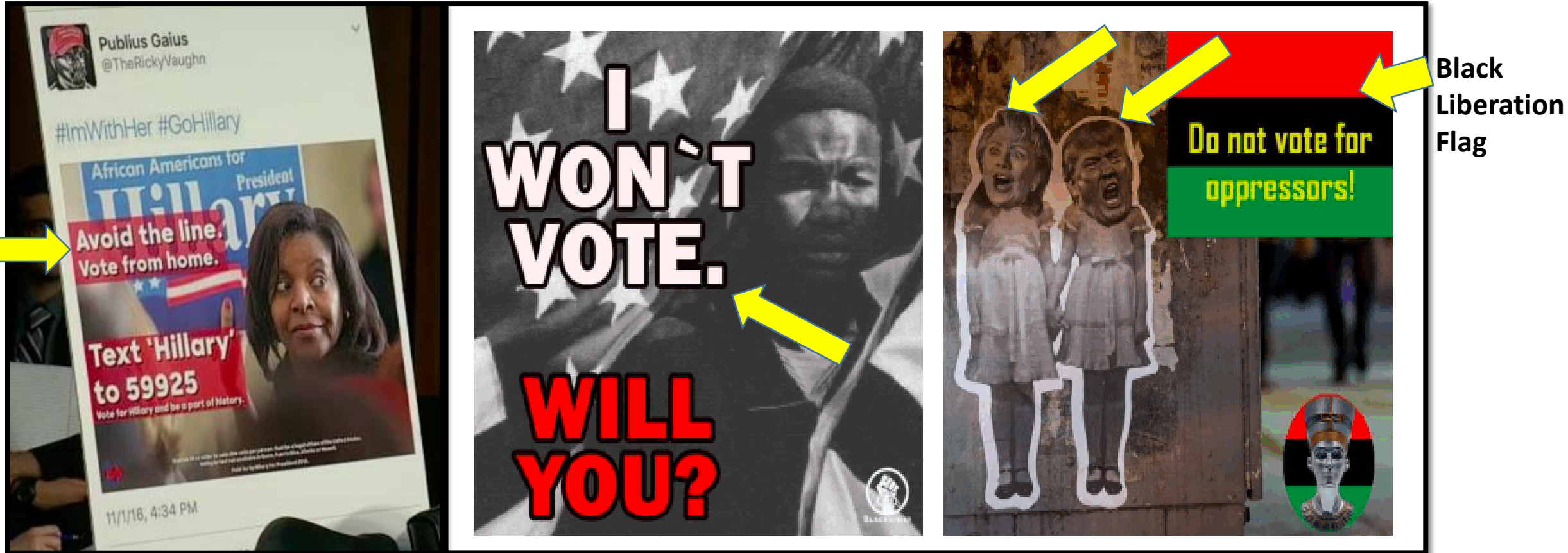
Anti-Islam



4

Discouraging Voters

Targeting Race



All out assault on African American voters using social media!



5

Oppression

Social media ads that divide American society

Anti-Law Enforcement

BM
Sponsored · 🌐

Two Black brothers were handcuffed by Colorado Springs police in a traffic stop for 'driving while Black'.


COLORADO SPRINGS COPS APPREHEND TWO MEN FOR 'DRIVING WHILE BLACK'




Colorado Springs Police Handcuff Two Black Brothers For No Given Reason | BM

Pro-Law Enforcement

Suggested Page

 **Back the Badge**
Sponsored

Community of people who support our brave Police Officers.



Back the Badge
Community
111,113 people like this.

Like Page



Other Major Foreign Cyber Adversaries of U.S.



Deep Fakes

Now Extremely Hard to Spot

- Super-imposing other peoples' faces onto real videos
- Anybody can be impersonated on social media
- Completely falsified videos, can be made to say anything



Real Barack
Obama

Jordan Peele

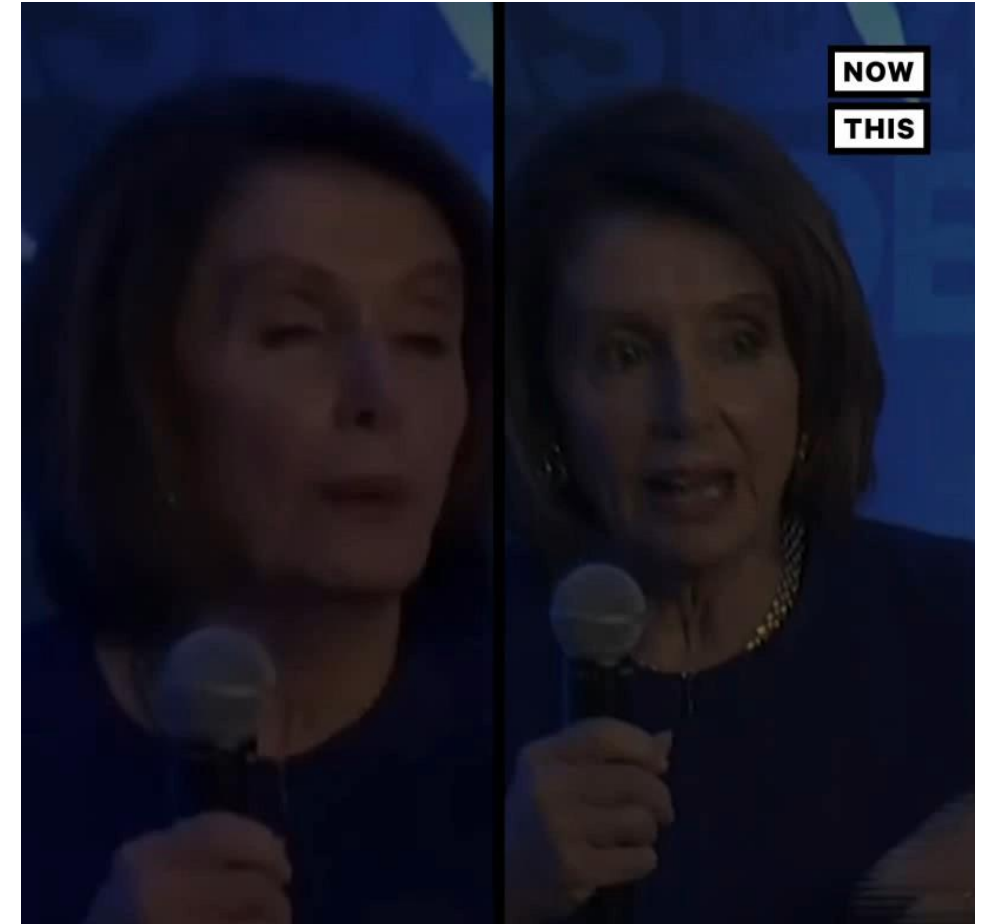
Jordan Peele
as
Barack Obama



Altered Videos

Real video is slowed down, sped up, etc. to alter perception

Unlike deep fakes, subject matter is not changed



Facebook: “We don’t have a policy that stipulates the information you post on Facebook must be true.”



Misinformation vs Disinformation

- **Misinformation**: false/inaccurate info, **regardless of intent**
- **Disinformation**: deliberately misleading, incorrect, or biased info; manipulated narratives, facts, propaganda, **spread with intent to deceive** or mislead
 - Examples: deep fakes, altered or augmented videos, partial truths



Misinformation Is Everywhere: AI Failure

PowerPost

Follow @powerpost
Get the Technology 202 Newsletter

PowerPost • Analysis

The Technology 202: Notre Dame cathedral fire reveals tech companies' struggle to combat misinformation



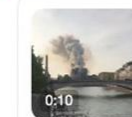
YouTube's defenses against misinformation just backfired in a big way -- and ended up contributing to baseless speculation online that the Notre Dame cathedral fire resulted from a terrorist attack.

35m
France: Muslim girl "in search of love" plotted to blow up car packed with gas canisters near Notre Dame cathedral



France: Muslim girl "in search of love" plotted to blow up car packed ...
It would be "Islamophobic" not to admire Ines Madani's wild romantic heart. After all, what says "love" more than blood spattered everywhere and
jihadwatch.org

11m
I'll bet a Muslim set Notre Dame on fire #NotreDame



Breaking News Feed @pzf
BREAKING NEWS: Huge fire reported at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France.

3 2 8

14m
Replying to [redacted]
And Muslims just burned down Notre-Dame cathedral.

2

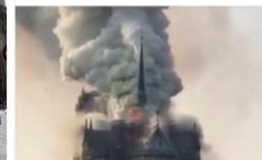
Muslims are setting historic Catholic Churches on fire all across France.

Most recently, Notre Dame Cathedral.

Where are the crusaders when you need them?



at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France.



Anyone Can Spread Disinformation



Ian Bremmer: American Political Scientist, founder of Eurasia Group consulting firm in NY, DC, London



“Half-Truths”

Covington High School Students exploited by news & social media

There are
always
two sides
to a story



1st reports
made student
appear as
aggressor; yet,
full video
shows man
with drum
purposely
confronted
the students



Disinformation

Russia's "*Operation Infektion*"

- **Disinformation is like a virus**
 - Russia plants fake news/reports in 4 corners of world
 - Then, they plant secondary reports that cite the first fake report
 - Then, they **watch it spread**
 - Once info circulates, it's hard to trace origin / "***ground zero***"
 - Soon, the fake stories get into Western news outlets



**USED BY BOTH SIDES. IN CONTEXT, SHE IS SAYING THIS
IS WHAT REPUBLICANS ARE DOING TO HER; AS SHOWN, IT
APPEARS SHE IS ADVOCATING FOR THE "WRAP-UP SMEAR."**

NANCY PELOSI ON FAKE NEWS SMEAR PROPAGANDA

**IN EITHER EVENT, THIS IS EXACTLY
WHAT THE RUSSIANS ARE DOING !**



Russia Wrap-Around Smear Operation Infektion

Infiltrated
far more
than just
Facebook
& **Twitter**

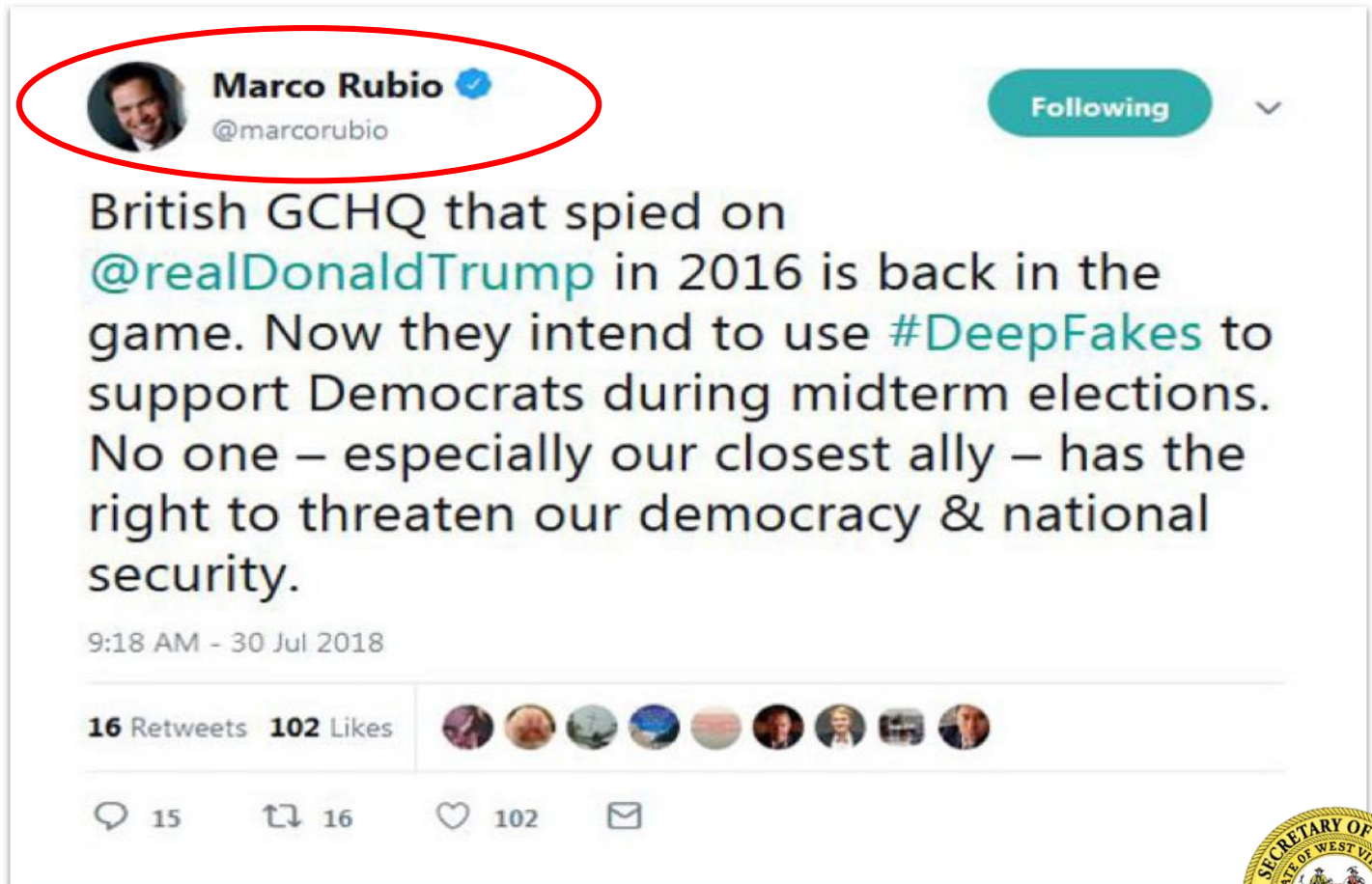
	English	Russian	German	French	Spanish	Ukrainian
Facebook						
Twitter						
Medium						
Reddit						
indybay.org						
homment.com						
change.org						
meinbezirk.at						
mein-suedhessen.de						
globedia.com						
mediavida.com						
beforeitsnews.com						
Livejournal						
cont.ws						
jeuxvideo.com						

Targeted
internet
platforms
across the
world,
posting in
at least **6**
languages



Impersonation of Political Figures

- Prime example of disinformation trying to divide U.S & U.K.
- Bad actors want us to turn on ourselves
- High profile figures can be impersonated as well



What Can You Do?



Protect

Detect

Correct



First: Protect

- **Be proactive; *learn to spot fake news***
 - Question validity of social media posts
 - Verify information using reputable sources to fact-check
- **Protect yourself, your devices, & internet accounts:**
 - **Always** use multi-factor authentication & complex passwords
 - Use a different password for every account
 - **Think before you link,** click or share anything questionable



Protect

Examine the Web Link – **red flags:**

- A “5” in place of an “S”, or a “0” in place of an “o”
- An extension on a legitimate site
 - Example: sos.wv.gov vs. sos.wv.gov.co

Watch for

- Misspelled words
- Awkward/improper language
- Jokes, parodies, etc. from satire/humor sources
- Shocking, exaggerated headlines

Check sources & evidence!



Second: Detect

- Identify phishing attempts & website impersonation
- Read all unauthorized access notices or alerts (email, texts, etc.)
- Don't ignore suspicious activity
- Ransomware – locks all data, pay \$ to regain access



From: onlinebanking@ealerts.bankofamerica.com
Subject: Bank Of America Alert : Account Suspended
Date: Tue, 26 Apr 2011 05:41:38 +0200



Detect: Some Fact-Checking Resources

- **Opensecrets.org** – shows who receives \$ from Russia
- **Realorfake.org** – exposes fake news sites
- **Politifact.com** – fact checks US politics
- **Factcheck.org** – holds politicians accountable
- **Stopfake.org** – fact-check by Ukrainian profs & students
- **Polygraph.info** – fact check by Radio Free Europe, VOA
- **Sunlightfoundation.com** – nonprofit newsroom
- **Propublica.org** – nonprofit newsroom
- **Bellingcat.org** – distributed, collaborative investigating
- **WhatsApp** – new tip line for misinformation (India)



Detect: Suspicious Emails

From: MS Settings Setup <officialsetin@micromsn365officials.org.com>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 7:47 PM
To: Jackson County
Subject: Reset Password In Process

This message was identified as a [phishing](#) scam.

Microsoft Office Email365

Your New Password Request

Your password reset is in process and your current password will expire shortly, the password reset link will be forward to the new alternative email submitted

Ignore this email notification your request will takes effect shortly

If you did not request this password reset

Use Cancel Request button to cancel the password reset and keep your password unchanged

[Cancel Request](#)


This action will take a brief period before this request takes effect


This is a mandatory communication about the service. To set communication preferences for other cases.


This message was sent from the email address is not monitored. Do not reply to this message.
[Privacy](#) | [Legal Notices](#)

Microsoft Corporation
600 Pine Street, Suite 352,
Seattle,
WA 98101, USA.

Mon 4/23/2018 1:48 PM

 **secure@access.info** <robmoore@compton.k12.ca.us>
validating dtackett@wvsos.gov


To:  David Tackett

 You forwarded this message on 4/23/2018 1:27 PM.
Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

This message was identified as a [phishing](#) scam.

Verify your email address

Your Office Premium E-mail has exceeded its mail-quota limit, and due for validation. In order to continue using your mailbox, you are advised to [validate your email here](#) within 24hrs. otherwise you be unable to receive and send message from dtackett@wvsos.gov

 Right-click or tap...

Sincerely,
The Azure Active Directory Team

Microsoft Corporation | [One Microsoft Way Redmond, WA 98052-6399](#)

This message was sent from an unmonitored email address. Please do not reply to this message.

Spear Phishing, Whaling

Specific Targets/Credential Harvesting

*Source: actual emails received by West Virginia officials



Detect: Anyone Can Be Hacked

HACKED

Joe Manchin's social media accounts hacked, the senator's office says

By Sean Sullivan

November 1, 2018 at 6:51 PM



Source: Washington Post



U.S. Senator's campaign, national news

HACKED

Instagram
To me [See Details](#)

Your Instagram password has been changed



Hi

The email on your Instagram account was changed from _____ at 23:52 (PDT) on Tuesday, October 23 2018.

Your new email is valkanovf@mail.ru. If you didn't change your email address, [revert this change](#).

We noticed a login from a new device.



MI 5s · Instagram app · Moscow, Russia
October 23 at 11:52 PM (PDT)

WV resident's personal social media compromised by Russia



Third: Correct

If you become a victim of a cyber incident:

- **Turn-off devices & disconnect from internet**
- **Change passwords to ALL accounts on a different device**
- **Report to internet/social media providers**
- **If asked for ransom (\$ or other value), report to police**



The Power of Fake News

Everybody Sees it, Not Everybody Knows it

- Pew: **23%** of adults shared a made-up news story
- Youth particularly targeted as vulnerable to misinformation
- Bots & AI **micro-targeting** intensify effectiveness



American Voting Machines

IMPORTANT FACT:

NO EVIDENCE that ANY Votes Were Changed In A U.S. Election!

US voting machines are decentralized & maintained independently by **each state.**

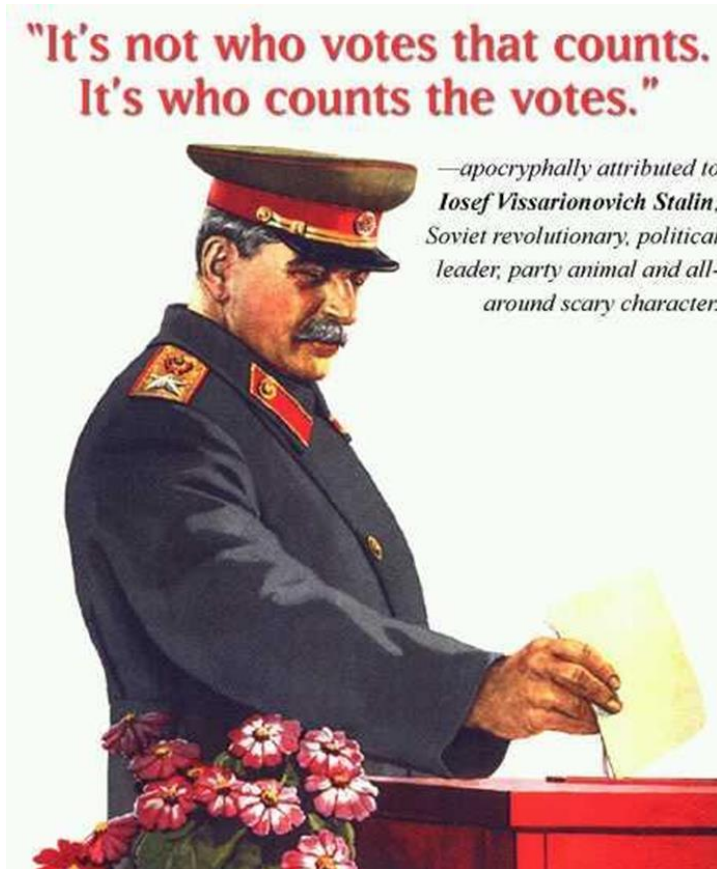
In WV, voting machines:

- 1. Are never connected to internet**
 - **> 1,700 precincts managed independently by 55 counties**
 - **Very difficult to hack; requires physical security breach**
- 2. Produce paper ballots that are verified by each voter**
- 3. Pre- & post-election audits ensure security & accuracy**



Media's Vital Role: They're a Target Too!

Today, it's who *reports* the votes!



Former Soviet Dictator Joseph Stalin

Food for thought

What if news agency is hacked & reports wrong winner?

Can we trust reported outcomes today?

Would public cry out for recount or new election?

Would public question legitimacy of results?



What's Going On? *Marvin Gaye*

3 Dimensional Chess

1. Body = Equipment, Ballots, Poll Books *(no problems)* **TRUTH**
2. Mind = Process, Tabulation, **Voter Registration, Reporting** *(some problems)*
3. Spirit = **American Psyche, Acceptance** *(real problems)* **TRUST**
This remains main **vector of Russian attack**

*Need both **Truth** AND **Trust***

**When we buy into
“America has never been so divided”
Russia wins!**



IT STARTS WITH YOU

“You can’t fix stupid” Ron White

An Educated Public Protects Democracy

Be Information Literate - Rely on the Human Dimension
Check sources; use **Trusted Sources** for critical info (elections!)
Seek accuracy over speed
Separate fact from opinion
Verify, confirm
Validate, authenticate

Don’t depend on technology to solve fake news

There is no algorithm to eliminate misinformation

You are our first line of defense!



Conclusion

Don't be a Russian Force Multiplier

- 1. Stay alert:** be conscious, aware & protect against false info.
- 2. Anticipate Russia's tactics;** < effective by exposing antics.
- 3. Minds, not machines:** Russia attacked minds/spirit; they had no success attacking voting machines.
- 4. Race with no finish line:** must stay ahead of bad actors.



REMEMBER

Russia Attacked Our Minds & Spirit, Not Our Machines

Summary



Full Video





For more information, contact:

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